



# ***News Release***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DES STAFF SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER TO YOUNG ADULTS IN FOSTER CARE**

PHOENIX – (December 18, 2006) Young adults transitioning from foster care to independent living are getting some holiday spirit from DES staff.

Leaving home and starting a life on your own can be a challenge for any young adult. Youth transitioning from foster care face additional challenges because they lack the support that often comes from parents and other family members. They often struggle to make ends meet while obtaining further education, employment and training. Through the DES Young Adult Program (YAP), foster youth who are between the ages of 17 and 21 may receive a monthly stipend, case management, and other services to help them become self-sufficient.

While the program helps with day to day life, special times like the holidays can be rough for youth transitioning from foster care. To heighten their holidays, DES staff have collected gifts for more than 200 young adults. On Monday, December 18, DES case workers will begin delivering gifts to these youth. Staff will load up gifts at 10:30 a.m. at the DES Central Office at 1789 West Jefferson in Phoenix and deliver them to some youth in Maricopa County that day. Case managers will continue to deliver gifts statewide up to Christmas Day.

While many of the youth that participated in the holiday gift program have aged out of the foster care system, there are still many youth in care who need foster or adoptive families. Interested individuals may visit [www.azkidsneedu.gov](http://www.azkidsneedu.gov) or call 1-877-KIDS-NEED-U.

In addition to helping children find safe, permanent homes, DES partners with community organizations throughout the year to provide additional assistance to foster children, including youth transitioning from care. Foster Angels of Arizona Serving Together, Inc. (FAAST) also provides support. Individuals and businesses can learn about ways to help through the organization's Web site at [www.fosterangelsaz.org/](http://www.fosterangelsaz.org/).

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